

PROSPECT PARK, PA—On Friday, May 8, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) along with Dr. Lois Snyder, Superintendent of Interboro, met with business and educational leaders at the Interboro School District Administration Building to discuss a program intended to better prepare students for success in the workforce by partnering schools directly with business and industry leaders. The program is entitled Business and Education—Secure Tomorrow Together Program, or Best2.

“In an effort to better prepare our students for the increasingly competitive workplace of the 21st century, Lois Snyder and I have sought the participation of school districts and companies for this important initiative,” said Congressman Sestak. “The mission of BEST2 is to be America’s premier example of partnering middle school students with the businesses and industries that can secure their economic future. It will provide students and parents an experience-based curriculum to help young Americans make informed decisions on how to effectively pursue adult careers. Working with mentors from local trades and professions, students will be exposed to the technologies, work ethic, responsibilities, and satisfaction associated with using of their scholastic ability, inborn talents, and energy to full effect.”

Participating businesses include Lithchem Energy, RL & Associates, Sunoco, Dragonfly Pictures, Southco Inc., Cetlin Design Group, Aker Philadelphia Shipyard, Piasecki Aircraft, Endo Pharmaceuticals, W.S. Cumby & Son, and others. School districts participating include Interboro, Southeast Delco, Chichester, West Chester Area, Phoenixville, and Upper Darby.

Opportunities exist for young people to excel in high-value manufacturing fields and obtain quality jobs within an “artisan” workforce, but they need to receive appropriate training during their school years. After hosting a Workforce Development Summit, convening meetings of his Higher Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee, and hosting an Education Summit, the Congressman brought together representatives of schools, institutions of higher education, and local businesses to develop the BEST2 initiative. Discussions with educators and employers determined that today’s artisan careers require a high degree of proficiency in sciences and math, and it is often too late to wait until high school to begin to beginning preparing for a career.

“This program will complement existing workforce development efforts for high school students,” the Congressman said. “However, high school is often too late to take full advantage of the natural curiosity and enthusiasm of young minds. By beginning at the middle school level, we can give our students the math and science proficiency to meet the increasing technical

demands of the modern ‘artisan’ workforce.”

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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